
March 8, 2022



**TESTIMONY OF SCOTT DOLCH, PRESIDENT & CEO,
CONNECTICUT RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION
BEFORE THE LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE**

Good afternoon Senator Kushner, Representative Porter, Senator Sampson, Representative Arora and members of the Labor & Public Employees Committee. My name is Scott Dolch and I am the President & CEO of the Connecticut Restaurant Association. On behalf of Connecticut's 8,500 restaurant and foodservice locations, I am here today to oppose House Bill 5353 and Senate Bill 318.

HB 5353: AAC A FAIR WORK WEEK SCHEDULE

An Act Concerning a Fair Work Week Schedule would negatively impact restaurants and small business owners across the state. Our industry is known for its FLEXIBILITY; flexibility for employers and employees alike. Many employees specifically seek work in our industry for the flexibility it allows. This proposed legislation would eliminate that flexibility and mandate a new system that would hurt both the employers and employees.

Over the past two years, we have seen more than 600 restaurants close in our state. For those that have managed to stay afloat, they have faced incredible challenges having to adjust to ever changing COVID guidelines, such as dining room closures, capacity limitations, business curfews and a drop in consumer confidence due to the pandemic. While these challenges have made it almost impossible to predict the future for restaurants, this proposal is asking this industry to do just that...predict the future.

As most are aware, on-call scheduling is an essential aspect to the hospitality industry due to many factors: dinner reservations or events being added or cancelled last minute; weather forcing a restaurant to close or causing closure of outdoor dining; employees calling out last minute, their shifts still needing coverage. These are just a few of the many examples that make this "one-size-fits-all" proposal a burden for all businesses that fall under the definition of employer, according to this proposal.

This legislation requires employers to post work schedules fourteen days in advance with little to no opportunity for changes, which would result in understaffing, eliminating shift-swapping and reducing on-call opportunities. Once implemented, this proposal would negatively impact the very people it's seeking to help, as the current system works, and it works for both the employer as well as the employee.

SB 318: AAC CAPTIVE AUDIENCE MEETINGS

This legislation seeks to limit an employer's ability to require employees to attend employer sponsored meetings concerning political or religious matters. The definition of political matters is overly broad and we believe would prohibit employers from requiring employees to attend meetings related to subjects such as: explaining new laws to employees which impact the restaurant industry and how they do their jobs, sharing industry charity events with employees, updating employees on regulations regarding FMLA. The list goes on.

I urge the Committee to reject this proposal.

I thank the Committee for your time today and am happy to answer any questions.